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Field Museum of
Natural History

The Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region

With Special Reference to the Illinois
and the Potawatomi

BY

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The Anthropological Leaflets of Field Museum are designed to give brief, non-technical accounts of some of the more interesting beliefs, habits and customs of the races whose life is illustrated in the Museum's exhibits.

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CLIFFORD C. GREGG, DIRECTOR

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CHICAGO, U.S.A.





• SIMON KAHQUADOS
Potawatomi Chief, Rat River, Wisconsin

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
CHICAGO, 1938

LEAFLET

NUMBER 24

The Indian Tribes of the Chicago Region

With Special Reference to the Illinois and the Potawatomi

PREFATORY NOTE

In August, 1926, a new exhibit illustrating the life and culture of the Potawatomi Indians was placed in James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Hall. At the time of the first white settlement this Indian tribe inhabited the Chicago region. It therefore seemed desirable to gather and preserve in the Museum as many relics as possible of the former aborigines of our territory and to have a worthy representation of them in the exhibits as an illustration of an interesting chapter in our local history. An endowment of Julius and Augusta N. Rosenwald enabled the institution to engage for this purpose Mr. M. G. Chandler, who by adoption is a member of the Potawatomi tribe and who has an intimate knowledge of the Central Algonkian group. During three months in 1925 he visited the Potawatomi and such related tribes as the Menominee, Winnebago, Sauk, and Fox, all widely scattered, and obtained excellent results both as to collections and data. An account of this expedition is contained in the Annual Report of the Director for the Year 1925 (pp. 427-429). There is also a brief description of the collections (pp. 416-417).

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This leaflet, prepared by Assistant Curator Strong, is based on the material collected by Mr. Chandler and on information supplied by him. The author has likewise utilized the existing literature and an unpublished document in manuscript written by De Gannes in 1721.

May this booklet appeal to all those who are in sympathy with the Indians and eager to learn of the past of our country, and may it stimulate interest and research in our local history and archaeology.

BERTHOLD LAUFER

Late Curator, Department of Anthropology

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The region around the southern end of Lake Michigan where the city of Chicago now stands has been the home of many peoples and the scene of much conflict in historic and probably in prehistoric times. It is the purpose of this essay to give in a brief outline the sequence of those peoples in so far as they are known, and to depict the background from which emerges the great commercial city of today. The history of the region as it pertains to the white man is well known, but before his advent and during the stirring conflicts of colonial times the various Indian tribes of the Great Lakes played a large part, and it is with the Indians that this article is mainly concerned.

ILLINOIS BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY

Like all the neighboring states, Illinois has long been noted for the various mounds and earthworks within her borders, and the nature of these aroused the curiosity of even the first settlers in the territory. For many years theories of all sorts were current, attributing the mounds to a race of "mound-builders" who, according to the predilections of the different writers, were supposed to have come direct from Asia, Mexico, or even more remote places. In the latter part of the last century the Bureau of American Ethnology undertook a survey of the mounds in the eastern United States. The reports which resulted from this work did much to foster a saner view of the problem and to bring it from the realms of wild speculation to those of science. Much intensive work remains to be done in Illinois before we may hope to trace accurately the cultural development of the region, but from the work so far completed the following general facts stand out.

While many of the mounds are doubtless prehistoric, some of them, representing practically every type in the state, have been proved by their contents to be post-Columbian. A great amount of historical evidence, moreover, clearly shows that the Indians occupying the mound region at the time they were visited by the first explorers, were actually "mound-builders," and raised both towns and places of worship on these artificial eminences. The human remains found in the mounds that have been excavated to date, are all of the American Indian type, and represent only the recent period of geologic time.

In northern Illinois none of the mounds appears to have been used for temple or village foundations. Sev-

eral types occur, the most striking being the effigy mounds, which seem to represent reptiles, birds, or mammals in shape. In Wisconsin, where the type is most numerous, they appear to have been the work of the ancestors of the Winnebago, and near-by peoples of Siouan stock. The accounts of these peoples speak of the mounds as representing the totem animals of their clans. The Illinois effigy mounds may have the same origin. A few large oval mounds occur, and there are large numbers of small round burial mounds as well. Along some of the low hills are found walls two or three feet high and sometimes 400 yards long. Like the effigy mounds these earthworks rarely contain burials. Their use is problematical, and while they are spoken of as "fortifications," their strategic value is not clear. Stone-lined graves, or cists, are found containing rather primitive grave gifts. Loskiel described actual burials among the Delaware Indians made in this manner, and similar graves known to be Shawnee occur in the south.

In southern Illinois many of the mounds, such as the Cahokia group, appear to have been eminences for temples or habitations. The tribes who built this type of artificial eminence are not known, though the Cherokee of northern Georgia and North Carolina made use of similar mounds for village and temple sites in early historic times. It is possible that peoples allied to the Cherokee at one time occupied the river valleys to the north and were driven out prior to the advent of the white man. In this connection it is interesting to note that recently a type of prehistoric culture similar to that of the Iroquois has been distinguished in southern Illinois. It is possible that the latter people may have been partly responsible for the disappearance of the older "mound-builders" in southern Illinois, as well as in Ohio. Such in general is the character of the archaeological evidence in the region under consideration,

although it is certain that more intensive archaeological work will establish a clearer time sequence and settle many of the problems which exist.

THE ILLINOIS

When the French explorers and missionaries first came into the region about the southern end of Lake Michigan, it was occupied by a tribe, or confederation of tribes, who called themselves Iliniwék ("men"), which seems, and was apparently meant to be, derogatory to their neighbors. The French early changed this name to Illinois, the name by which the state is known at present. These people belonged to the great Algonkian speech family, and at the time of their discovery formed a confederacy of the Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Michigamea, Moingwena, Peoria, and Tamaroa tribes. On the authority of General Harrison it has been stated that the Miami were a branch tribe of the Illinois. Bearing on this question, the De Gannes manuscript of 1721 contains the following statements: "I was told that the languages of the Illinois and of the Miami were the same, and this is true, there being no difference except that the accent of the Illinois is very short and that of the Miami very long During four consecutive years that I remained with the Aouciatons at Chicagoua, which is the most considerable village of the Miami, who have been settled there ten or twelve years, I have found no difference between their manners and those of the Illinois, nor in their language. The only difference is that they [the Miami] remain settled in one place only a very short time." Whatever political bonds may have existed previously seem to have been severed before historic times; for, in the accounts of Father Marquette and La Salle, the Miami appear as a separate tribe.

Father Hennepin, about 1680, estimates the Illinois population at 6,500 souls, living in 400 houses. La Salle, in 1684, states that there were then gathered at Fort St. Louis 3,680 warriors, about one-third of whom were



SKETCH OF CHICAGO IN 1820
From Schoolcraft, Indian Tribes

Illinois. The above estimates seem more exact and reasonable than that given in the Jesuit Relation for 1660, which represents the Illinois as living southwest of Green Bay, in 60 villages, with a population of 20,000 men or 70,000 souls. The various bands of the Illinois were scattered over southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and along the west bank of the Mississippi River as far south as the Des Moines River, Iowa. They were first encountered by the whites at La Pointe, Wisconsin, in 1667, where Allouez met a band of Illinois who had come in to trade. In 1670, the same priest found a number of them in a Mascouten village on the upper Fox River, about nine miles from where Portage City now stands, but this band was then planning to join their tribesmen on the Mississippi. It appears that the various bands of the Illinois wandered over quite a large territory south of the Great Lakes and were in close contact with the northern Lake tribes who later occupied the territory when the Iroquois had driven the Illinois west of the Mississippi.

The Illinois were undoubtedly the first historic inhabitants of the region in question, but owing to their early extinction details of their life and society are scant. The mode of living of the Illinois, in their cultivation of maize and use of forest products, suggests the Eastern Woodland culture area; but their great dependence on the buffalo, which they hunted every autumn, resembles that of the Great Plains. The region around the southern end of Lake Michigan represents geographically an extension of the Plains into the Woodland area, and the native culture which existed there shows a close relationship to the environment.

In the present account of the Illinois the scanty historic references to them have been supplemented by the manuscript account of De Gannes. While there is

some doubt as to exactly who he was, and while it is possible that he merely signed the account, but did not write it, the manuscript itself bears all evidence of authenticity. It presents one of the most complete accounts of the Illinois, just after the advent of the French, that have come down to us.

According to Father Hennepin, the cabins of the more northerly Illinois were made like long arbors covered with double mats of reeds, so well sewed that neither wind nor rain nor snow could penetrate. According to De Gannes, the reeds for these mats were secured by the women, who gathered them in canoes and wove them into mats oftentimes 60 feet long. These they called *apacoya*, a generic name for coverings of all sorts. Hennepin states that each house had four or five fires, and accommodated from eight to ten families. The villages were not enclosed by palisades, but according to De Gannes were usually placed in the open, where a good view of the surrounding country was to be had.

Maize was planted in the spring by the squaws, who thrust a stick into the ground and dropped the seeds in rows. Later in the season the old men and captives, often from the western tribes, did a little cultivating with hoes made of the shoulder-blades of deer. According to De Gannes, pumpkins were also raised, cut into disks, and dried. When the maize crop was gathered, it was hidden in storage cellars, often under the houses. In such cellars La Salle and his *voyageurs* found a plentiful supply of food when they encountered temporarily deserted Illinois villages on the Mississippi.

After the harvest the tribes would move to the west on their annual buffalo hunt, traveling along the river valleys. As a rule, they did not venture far out on the Plains; for, prior to the acquisition of the horse, that vast, scantily watered area was a barrier rather than an aid to travel. The account of De Gannes tells of the Illinois securing water from the paunches of the dead buffalo

while on the Plains. He states that guards for the buffalo hunt were appointed by the old men, and, prior to the first big slaughter of the buffalo, any person who strayed away from camp was punished. After the buffalo were killed, a large frame called *gris* was made, and the meat placed on it to be dried by fires placed under the frame. The women did most of the drying, and all the meat from one side of the buffalo would be stripped off in as thin a layer as possible. This was folded like a portfolio, for ease in transportation. If the buffalo were thin a strong man could carry eight of these for a whole day; but in the autumn, when the buffalo cows were fat, four such meat *parfleches* would be a good load. During the hunt, deer, bear, and young turkeys were killed, and feasts were frequently given. One day, De Gannes relates, out of courtesy he was forced to go to ten such feasts, for strangers who happened to be with the tribe were invited. He adds that Miami, Pontonatamis (Potawatomi), and Cikapowa (Kickapoo) were often present at such times.

Besides these products of the field and the chase, the Illinois gathered many edible roots, blackberries, and chestnuts, and obtained an abundance of wild fowl from the vast migrating hordes of geese, ducks, and swans. Fish of many kinds were speared in the lakes and rivers. After a successful autumn the people would settle down in their winter quarters, to loaf, play games, and feast until their supply of food was exhausted. A favorite game of the Illinois, according to De Gannes, was lacrosse. As played by them, it was a brutal sport, and many people were seriously crippled by being hit over the legs with the heavy rackets or by the solid wooden ball. Village played against village, and large numbers took part. During their hours of leisure, which included most of the time save when they were hunting or fighting, the men gambled, playing a game in which about 200 small sticks were employed. The player divided the sticks, and as the count by sixes came out odd or even, he scored

or lost counters. Reduced to desperate straits, the men even gambled away their female relatives in the excitement of the game.

Of the clans and other features of their social organization we know very little, except that the Illinois, as a whole, had the crane, bear, white deer, fork, and tortoise totems. The account of De Gannes adds the buffalo, cat (wildcat), and lynx as "manitous" of the Illinois, but it is not altogether clear whether he speaks of clan or personal totems.

The following details of Illinois social organization are all from De Gannes' account. All persons in each village called one another by kinship terms, and the men had several wives, usually relatives. The sisters, aunts, and nieces of a man's wife were called *nirimoua*; if a man was a successful hunter, he could marry all women who were thus related to him. The term *nirimoua* was reciprocal; that is, all such women called the man also by that term. Before he could marry, a boy must be over twenty-five years of age, and have been on several war expeditions. The marriage was arranged by the man's parents, and presents, including slaves, were exchanged. When a man died, his wife was forbidden to marry for a year, during which time she must mourn her dead husband. Should she break the taboo, she was killed, which was also the penalty of unfaithfulness, and her scalp was raised on a pole over the house of the husband's family.

During periodic sickness and at childbirth, women lived in special huts, and before a woman and child could return to their home, it had to be thoroughly cleaned, and a new fire lighted. *Berdaches*, that is, men who lived and dressed like women, were numerous. These men imitated the ways of women in all things.

There were a large number of medicine-men or shamans, who attempted to cure ailments by sucking as well as by chants and ceremonies which they learned through



BEADED GARTERS
Potawatomi

visions. Once a year all the shamans had a ceremony at which they exhibited their powers, supposedly killing and curing one another. To impress the uninitiated, they danced with rattlesnakes whose fangs had been removed, and performed other acts of chicanery. On the other hand, these shamans were often successful in curing wounds by cleaning them out, washing them with decoctions of herbs, and bandaging them. Sprains and broken bones they likewise treated successfully.

There were several chiefs in a village. Each controlled from thirty to fifty young men. When it was decided that the tribe should go on the war-path, often as a result of visions received by the leaders, the fetishes of the chiefs were invoked. These fetishes were in the form of reed mats in which were placed feathers of various birds. On the war-path the leader carried his sacred mat, enclosing feathers from the fetishes of his followers as well; their success was believed to depend on the power of this "medicine." Usually small parties went on raids into enemy country, the young men inexperienced in war tending to all the wants of the others. These young warriors were not allowed to remove their packs from their backs until the return trip. None of the war party was allowed to use knives in eating, as they believed that by observing this taboo they would be irresistible, in which, De Gannes adds, they were often mistaken. When the enemy was encountered, the warriors endeavored to be first to touch a dead enemy or a prisoner, for only thus could they claim the victim. Should members of his party be killed, the leader was forced to pay their families for them.

Usually the women and children captured were spared as slaves, while the men were tortured by fire. After an hour or so of torture the body was cut open, the heart eaten raw, and mothers hastened to dip the feet of male children in the blood of the thoracic cavity. Certain

individuals among the Illinois were known as cannibals, because they always ate portions of the slain captives.

The Illinois, according to De Gannes, buried their dead in shallow trenches, with a forked post at each end. The grave was lined with planks, usually from old canoes, and the grave covered over at top and ends by stakes. Grave gifts consisted of a kettle or earthen pot, bow and arrows (in the case of men), and a handful of corn and tobacco. Often a calumet pipe was put in the grave. In the case of a renowned chief, De Gannes adds, a tree forty or fifty feet high was stripped of its bark and set up by the grave. This was painted red and black, and a portrait of the dead chief painted on it. Two bundles of small logs indicating the number of men that the deceased had slain and captured, were attached to the tree. Other accounts of early French explorers speak of the Illinois placing their dead in trees, and from the types of skeletons found in various mounds in their country, it seems clear that the dried bones of such burials were sometimes gathered up and buried in rude stone graves.

The Illinois are described as physically well built, especially the men. According to De Gannes, they tattooed the entire back, and often the stomach. They were friendly and talkative, but easily discouraged, treacherous, and cowardly. In war they were excellent archers, and also used the war club and a kind of lance. But the proud title of "men" which they gave themselves seems to have been undeserved, for in the successive wars with the Iroquois, Siouan, and northern Lake tribes they were almost invariably defeated. The events which led to the displacement and practical extinction of the Illinois will be dealt with in the latter part of this leaflet.

A small remnant of about 150 Illinois half-breeds were living at the Quapaw agency, Oklahoma, in 1928. All of them have abandoned their own customs and only a few retain any knowledge of their language.

THE MIAMI

The Illinois were driven from the Chicago region by the Iroquois, for in 1671 Dablon states that they were then living across the Mississippi, where they had been driven by the former people. Their place seems to have been taken by the Miami, another Algonkian tribe, who appear to have been formerly associated with the Illinois, as well as the northern Lake tribes. These people were first met by the French near Green Bay, Wisconsin, where Perrot visited them on the headwaters of the Fox River in 1666 and 1670. In 1671, part of the tribe at least were living with the Mascoutens in a palisaded village in the same locality. Considering the extent of territory occupied by the tribe a few years later, it seems probable that when the Miami were first encountered by the French in Wisconsin, a large portion of their tribe was already living in northeastern Illinois and northern Indiana. Shortly after Perrot's visit the Miami separated from the Mascoutens and their neighbors, moving to the southern end of Lake Michigan.

Writing in 1721, Father Charlevoix says: "Fifty years ago, the Miamis [Wea band] were settled on the southern extremity of Lake Michigan, in a place called Chicago, from the name of a small river which runs into the lake, the source of which is not far distant from that of the river of the Illinois [the Des Plaines]. They are at present divided into three villages, one of which stands on the River St. Joseph, the second on another river [the Maumee] which bears their name and runs into Lake Erie, and a third upon the River Quabache, which empties its waters into the Mississippi. The last are better known by the appellation of Quayatanons." In 1674, Father Marquette mentions Chicago as a Wea (Miami) village; but in 1705, when Vincennes was sent on a mission to the Miamis, he found them occupying the territory northwest of the

upper Wabash River. Attacks by the Sioux seemed to have caused this movement, which was later accelerated by the southern movement of the Potawatomi and Kickapoo tribes.

The Miami were a people of medium stature, agreeable countenance, and, according to early French accounts, were distinguished for their affability. The women, as a rule, were dressed in buckskin, but the men wore few clothes, and were tattooed all over the body. Like the Illinois, the Miami were land travelers rather than canoe-men. Hennepin describes their buffalo hunts, in which they surrounded the herd with grass fires, leaving only a small opening where the buffalo were shot as they stampeded from the fire. Bags of buffalo hair were woven by the women and used as containers for the dried buffalo-meat.

Perrot states that the Miami village which he visited was situated on a hill and surrounded by a palisade, and that the houses were covered with rush mats. It has been claimed that the Miami were taught to build palisades around their villages by La Salle. This may be true, but it is not necessary as an explanation, for palisaded villages occurred both to the north and east of the Miami. Early explorers state that they worshipped the sun and the thunder; but it is highly probable that they worshipped various manitou, as the Algonkian people termed the many forces of nature, which they believed inhabited both animate and inanimate objects. Among the Miami who lived about Fort Wayne three forms of burial have been noted: ordinary ground burial in a shallow grave; surface burial in a hollow log, often one especially hollowed out; and surface burial in which the body is covered with a small pen of logs which meet at the top.

According to Lewis H. Morgan, the Miami had 10 clans; but Chauvignerie, in 1737, states that they have two principal totems, the elk and crane, while some have the bear. Other authorities mention the crane and turtle



POTAWATOMI YARN BAGS

Upper left, for ceremonial articles, decorated with horned water-panther design

Upper right for ceremonial articles

The one below was used for personal possessions



totems. As none of these totems are recorded in Morgan's list, the exact situation is not clear. Estimates in regard to the former numbers of the tribe are likewise only tentative; De Gannes, in 1687, states that they were as numerous as the Illinois, and at that time occupied six villages. An estimate made in 1764 gives them a population of 1,500. Though the Miami were forced to leave the Chicago region, nevertheless they appear to have been a strong people and brave in battle. For, as Beckwith points out, they caused even the Iroquois to seek aid from the American colonies, and they fought the French, English, and Americans in turn as their policy demanded.

In 1928, a small group of 60 Miami half-breeds were living at the Quapaw agency, Oklahoma, and about 200 of them near Peru, Indiana. Both of these groups have abandoned their ancient customs and traditions.

THE POTAWATOMI

The tribe that held the Chicago region from about the close of the seventeenth century until 1833 was the Potawatomi. They are discussed here at some length, as they played an important role throughout the early American period, and we are fortunate in possessing quite detailed accounts of their mode of life. According to a tradition possessed by all three tribes, the Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa were once one people, and appear in history more or less simultaneously in the territory about the upper end of Lake Huron.

The name Potawatomi means "People of the Place of Fire," as did the Huron name Asistaguerouïon, which Champlain used in referring to the western enemies of the Huron. The term "Fire Nation" was at first used rather generally in referring to the Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox, and other tribes whose territories in early times met near Green Bay, Wisconsin. Later, one band of the Potawatomi, those dwelling to the south on the prairie, became known as the Mascoutens, or "Little Prairie-people," while the other division living in northern Wisconsin became known as the Forest Potawatomi. There seems to have been another Algonkian tribe in the same region which was also known as the Mascoutens, that later merged with the Sauk; hence the unrestricted use of such terms as "Fire People" or "Mascoutens" by early priests and explorers often leaves some doubt as to the exact people referred to. However, as Skinner points out, the term "Mascouten" generally implies a branch of the Potawatomi. Many early accounts mention the Potawatomi, and the impression one receives from these varies with the personal experiences of the writers. As a general rule the French accounts are favorable, and the English accounts are not; for the friendship between the pioneers of France and the Potawatomi was early formed

and lasting. In 1666, Father Allouez describes the Potawatomi as "a people whose country is about the lake of Ill-i-mouek, a great lake that has not come to our knowledge, adjoining the lake of the Hurons and that of the Puants [Winnebago at Green Bay] between the east and the south. They are a warlike people, hunters and fishers. Their country is good for Indian corn of which they plant fields, and to which they repair to avoid the famines that are too frequent in these quarters. They are in the highest degree idolaters, attached to ridiculous fables and devoted to polygamy Of all the people that I have associated with in these countries, they are the most docile and affectionate toward the French. Their wives and daughters are more reserved than those of other nations. They have a kind of civility among them, and make it quite apparent to strangers, which is rare among our barbarians."

In 1718, an official "Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi," gives the following account of the Potawatomi village near Detroit:

"The port of Detroit is south west of the river. The village of the Potawatomes adjoins the fort; they lodge partly under *apauquois* [an Ojibwa term for reed mats] which are made of mat grass.

"The women do all the work. The men belonging to the nation are well clothed, like our domiciliated Indians at Montreal. Their entire occupation is hunting and dress. They make use of a great deal of vermilion and in winter wear buffalo robes richly painted, and in summer either red or blue cloth. They play a good deal at La Crosse in summer, twenty or more on a side. Their bat is a sort of a little racket, and the ball with which they play is made of very heavy wood, somewhat larger than the balls used at tennis. They are entirely naked except breech cloth and moccasins on their feet. Their bodies are completely painted with all sorts of colors. Some, with white clay, trace white lace on their bodies, as if on

all the seams of a coat, and at a distance, it would be taken for silver lace. They play very deep and often the bets sometimes amounting to more than eight hundred livres. They set up two poles, and commence the game from the centre; one party propels the ball from one side, and the others from the opposite, and whichever reaches the goal wins. It is a fine recreation well worth seeing. They often play village against village, the Poux ["Lice," a nickname for the Potawatomi] against the Ottawas, or Hurons, and at heavy stakes. Sometimes the French join in the game with them.

"The women cultivate Indian-corn, beans, squashes and melons, which come up very fine. The women and girls dance at night. They adorn themselves considerably; grease their hair, paint their faces with vermilion, put on a white chemise, wear whatever wampum they possess, and are very tidy in their way. They dance to the sound of the drum and *si-si-quoi* [pronounced *shi-shi-gwan*] which is a sort of gourd containing some grains of shot. Four or five young men sing and beat time with the drum and rattle, and the women keep time, and do not lose a step. It is very interesting, and lasts almost the entire night.

"The old men dance the medicine [dance]. They resemble a set of demons; and all this takes place during the night. The young men often dance in a circle and strike posts. It is then they recount their achievements, and dance, at the same time, the war dance; and whenever they act thus they are highly ornamented. It is altogether very curious. They often perform these things for tobacco. When they go hunting, which is every fall, they carry their *apauquois* with them, to hut under at night. Everybody follows—men, women and children. They winter in the forest and return in the spring."

Very different in tone are the various early accounts of the Potawatomi given by the English explorers and traders. John Long ("Voyages and Travels in the Years

1768-88") characterizes the Poes (Potawatomi) as "a very wild, savage people, who have an aversion to Englishmen and generally give them as much trouble as possible in passing or repassing the Fort of St. Joseph's, where some French traders are settled by their permission." Somewhat similar are the complaints of Sir William Johnston in 1772, in regard to murders and robberies committed by the Potawatomi, instigated by the jealousy of French traders. The Potawatomi were evidently good friends and bad enemies, and seem to have long maintained their individuality and pride even under adverse circumstances. Writing in 1838, in regard to the Potawatomi who had been removed to Council Bluffs, Iowa, Father De Smet says: "We arrived among the Potawatomis on the afternoon of the 31st of May. Nearly 2,000 savages in their finest rigs and carefully painted in all sorts of patterns, were awaiting the boat at the landing. I had not seen so imposing a sight nor such fine-looking Indians in America: the Iowas, the Sauks, and the Otoes are beggars compared to these." Simon Kahquados, a recent chief of the Potawatomi in Wisconsin, whose portrait is given here (Plate I), illustrates Father De Smet's description of the imposing appearance of the Potawatomi.

Recent studies of the Prairie Potawatomi have been made, and more is known of their daily and ceremonial life than is the case with the Illinois or Miami. The Potawatomi have for a long time been separated into two divisions: the Forest and Prairie groups. The former group appears to have kept most of the old culture traits characteristic of the Algonkian peoples in general, while the Prairie bands have been influenced first by the Miami and Illinois tribes, and later by the Sauk and Fox, so that their customs which prevailed some 50 years ago seem somewhat mixed. There were about 10 bands of the Prairie Potawatomi, the largest of which called themselves "Muskodens," and formerly dwelt about the southern end of Lake Michigan with their main town at

the site of modern Chicago. Prairie Potawatomi society was composed of some 23 clans, which reckoned descent in the father's line. They were named after natural phenomena such as the raven, bear, buffalo, man, etc., and these were grouped according to type of name; for example, the sea and fish clans would belong to the water division or phratry. In addition to these groupings there were two large divisions of society characterized by the use of black or white paint, the oldest child always joining the former division, the second child the other, and so on in succession. A similar division of all the tribe between the upper and lower worlds, according to whether the clan totem was a bird or a mammal, also existed.

Each clan had a sacred bundle containing various objects believed to be sacred. It was the possession of such bundles that gave power and success to the clans in their activities, according to the belief of the Indians. Many of the bundles were supposedly given the clans by the great culture-hero Wi'sakä, but others were acquired or made as the result of dreams, or visions of the people who originated the clan. Thus each bundle came to have a special legend attached to it, accounting for its origin.

The chieftainship of the Prairie Potawatomi was usually hereditary in the fish clan, and the chief was largely a civil and military authority. He appointed each year a ceremonial chief who conducted all the ceremonies and activities of the people. Should a man commit murder, the tribal chief would send for the keeper of the tribal peace-pipe (Plate VIII), and a council would be held to discuss the case. If the chief thought the man guilty, he would smoke the pipe, and the murderer would be executed. If the man appeared not to be guilty, the pipe bearer with flint and steel would attempt to light his pipe; if he succeeded in four strokes of the steel, the man went free; but if he failed, the man was executed. It was possible for an influential man to escape the con-

sequences of three murders; but if he should kill four people, nothing could save him.

Special names in honor of their exploits were given to warriors who were brave in battle, and war honors were awarded to the first four men who touched a dead foe, in order of precedence. This was a much more noteworthy feat in the eyes of the Potawatomis than merely killing an enemy. A single tuft of hair from the crown of the head was taken as a scalp; prisoners were often tortured and scalped by the boys and young men. Before war parties the aid of the clan bundles was invoked, and special war bundles were carried by the leaders on campaigns, in front of them on the out trip and behind them on the return, so that the bundle would always be between them and the enemy.

Young children were given names at a ceremony for the clan bundles, and these names usually referred to the name of their clan. In former times when children reached the age of about ten years, the parents would urge them to fast all day and seek a vision. By the time children were fifteen or sixteen years of age, they were made to go from four to eight days without eating or drinking. All this was to enable the children to have a vision which would give them a guardian spirit through life, and would bring them success. Only when he had obtained such a dream was a boy considered to be a man.

Marriages were usually arranged between the parents of a boy and girl, but the boy's and girl's consent was usually obtained. If all parties agreed, then the boy came to his bride's lodge that night, and the marriage was concluded. Sometimes a youth would pick out the girl he wanted for himself and tell her his desire. If she was agreeable, she had her family invite all his relatives to a feast. Then, well mounted, the groom rode to the bride's house and dismounted, going into the wigwam where the girl sat beside the rawhide trunks that held all her possessions. Standing there, the boy took off all his

clothes and presented them to her; and she, opening her trunks, gave him an entire new outfit of clothing which he donned immediately. Then the feast began, the two families exchanging food. At the close of the feast an old man lectured the young couple on their mutual duties, and other relatives of both of them followed, in turn. The horse was brought out, and the girl rode over to the boy's lodge; here his relatives dressed her in new clothes, and she returned, bringing all the groom's possessions. Thus the marriage was concluded.

The houses of the Potawatomi were similar to those of their neighbors; the round birch bark and mat house was used in winter, and the larger, rectangular, mat-covered house in summer. Occasionally buffalo-hide tipis were used. When a new lodge was made in the autumn, a feast of dog meat, elaborately prepared, was eaten, and offerings of tobacco and cedar smoke were made before the house could be occupied. In such rites the chief's wife was always first, and the others followed. A similar ceremony occurred in the spring, when they moved into the square mat-houses.

The leaders of the annual buffalo hunt were chosen from among the principal men of the buffalo clan, and usually the keeper of the clan bundle was chosen. A feast was then held, and imitative ceremonies supposed to attract the buffalo were held. At the close of the feast, representatives of the two tribal divisions (moieties) held an eating race; the winners in consuming the hot food were appointed to carry the sacred buffalo clan bundle on the hunt. Sixteen braves were appointed by the leader as guards or police, and these carried elkhorn-handled whips with which they enforced the rules of the hunt. As they travelled west toward the buffalo ranges, no hunting was allowed, for it might frighten the herds.

When buffalo were sighted, the hunters were divided into two groups to surround the herd if possible, and the hunt was carried on under the control of the 16 police.



POTAWATOMI MAN'S COSTUME

When the first hunt terminated, each person brought a piece of meat to the leader as an offering, and a ceremonial feast was held. After this the hunt was resumed, but all were now allowed to hunt separately and as they pleased. When the hunt was over a feast was held, dried meat, robes, and tallow were packed, and the people started for home. On the return trip the four men beaten in the eating contest carried the buffalo clan bundle. At night the hunters fired the prairie, so that those remaining at home might see the smoke and prepare the camp for their reception. When they reached camp, all repaired to their own houses; the next day a feast was held by the buffalo clan to name all children born while the hunt was on. After this ceremony was over, all the other clans had naming ceremonies and feasts. Then followed a time of games and feasting.

The Potawatomi likewise sent out quite large parties to secure deer, and black bears were hunted in winter when they were sleeping in caves. Beaver, otter, mink, and muskrat were trapped and snared for fur and for food. Gill nets of bark or fiber twine were made and set in lakes and streams; in the winter time fish were speared through the ice, or were caught in seines. In spring, quantities of ducks and geese were killed and preserved in brine. In addition to all these products of the chase, they cultivated maize, squash, beans, and tobacco, while the forests and lakes furnished quantities of berries and wild rice. As the account of Allouez indicates, famines occurred when one or more staples failed them, but ordinarily the people of the Great Lakes must have had a large and varied food supply.

The Potawatomi of the lakes had both birch bark canoes and dugouts, which are typical of the Lake tribes; but the Prairie Potawatomi while on the Plains used the bull-boat, a raw buffalo hide stretched over a wooden frame, to transport their goods across rivers. Similarly, after the introduction of the horse, they used the *travois*,

two poles dragged on each side of a horse, with their possessions lashed on behind. The war club, the lance, the bow and arrow, and the knife constituted the weapons of the Potawatomi. Like the *travois* and the bull-boat, the Prairie Potawatomi made use of a round shield of buffalo hide. These three things are more typical of the Plains tribes than of the Eastern Woodland peoples to whom in most other characteristics the Potawatomi belonged.

The art of the Potawatomi as manifested in porcupine quill and bead work seems more characteristic of the Central Algonkians than the Plains tribes. This design work appears most commonly on their medicine bags, clothing, and mats (Plates III-VII), and is characterized by either flamboyant scroll work or by isolated graceful designs. Diamond-shaped central figures, with leaf or scroll corner designs, rectangular diamond shapes with different colors in them, and spider-web designs are all typical Potawatomi motifs, according to Mr. M. G. Chandler, who is well acquainted with their art.

The clothing of the Potawatomi which is still obtainable largely represents colonial styles of the early settlers, readapted by the Indians (Plates I, V, VI). The decorative designs on this clothing are largely native, whether in bead or ribbon appliqué work, but the material, and in some cases the cut, is derived from the whites. The collection of Potawatomi clothing and decorative bead and quill work gathered for the Museum by Mr. Chandler, and now on exhibition, clearly demonstrates the above points.

The religion of the Potawatomi, like that of most of the Central Algonkian people, is hard to reduce to a formula, largely because it does not seem to have been formally conceptualized in the minds of the Indians. Schoolcraft states that the Potawatomi believed in a good spirit and a bad spirit who governed the world between them, but this is a reflection of the Christian doctrine. They did, however, conceive of a "Great Spirit"

which originally may have been the sun; and besides this vaguely personified deity, their pantheon contained the archaic deities of fire, sun, and the sea, as well as gods of the four directions. The evil power in the water was the great horned water-panther (Plate IV, upper left), who was at constant war with the Thunderbirds. The worship of the manitou, or power believed to be in other natural objects such as plants or animals, was also a vital part of their religious belief. They believed that the human body had but one soul or spirit, and that this spirit eventually followed a trail over the Milky Way into the western heavens to a land ruled over by Teibia'bos, the brother of Wi'sakä, the great culture hero. The power of the various manitou or spirits was often visualized by the sacred clan bundles, and around these most of their ceremonials radiated. At such feasts specially reared dogs were eaten, and no ceremonial was complete without dog meat. Dogs used for this purpose were carefully raised, kept from the polluting association of other dogs, and only killed after many formalities had been observed.

Besides the clan bundle ceremonials there are those of the medicine lodge, which may be joined by men and women. The purposes of the society are to prolong life and cure sickness, and in their keeping are various sacred myths of the Potawatomi. In the medicine lodge ceremonies decorated animal skins are carried (Plate VII). The ritual and initiation ceremonies are complex and known only to the initiated. There are various other societies, such as the Waubano society or cult, composed of those men who in their visions saw phenomena connected with the dawn. The drum of a member of the Waubano society which depicts his vision is shown in Plate VIII. Other cults existed based on other dream experiences, such as the Dream or Religion dance, of rather late origin, and in addition to these are the Warrior's, Begging, and purely social dances.

The Potawatomi claim to have received from the Comanche the series of ceremonies called the Peyote cult. These ceremonies center around a small cactus which grows in Mexico and the southwestern United States, that produces a sort of spiritual exaltation when eaten. The spread of the Peyote cult in historic times has been remarkable, and today it is one of the strongest cults existing among the Indians of the United States and Mexico.

For three nights after a death the clan members of the deceased sing, pray, and go through ceremonies to propitiate and scare away the ghost. A coffin is then made from a hollow tree, members of another clan dig the grave, and the body is buried in the cemetery of the clan to which the person formerly belonged. It is interesting to note that dead members of the man, or human clan, were interred sitting up against a back rest, with a framework of logs around them. With the dead are placed a few weapons or utensils, and formerly a favorite horse was sacrificed at the man's grave to serve his master in the journey to the other world. Various mounds have been found in the vicinity of Potawatomi burials, but there seems to be no correlation between any type of mound and the burials of the tribe.

The Potawatomi Indians still retain some of their old religious beliefs and customs, and are rated as more conservative than any of the other existing Chicago-land tribes.

At the present time they are scattered over several states. The following groups were observed in 1930:

Pokagon's Band, near Hartford, Michigan; 60 to 75 individuals; mixed bloods.

Citizen Potawatomi, central Oklahoma; about 1,500 mixed bloods; now farmers and stock raisers.

Kansas Potawatomi, eastern Kansas; about 600 mixed bloods; mostly farmers; some borrowing of Plains Indian customs.



POTAWATOMI WOMAN'S COSTUME

Wisconsin Potawatomi, northeastern Wisconsin; probably 500 or 600, none of whom appear to be of pure Indian blood. Because this region is wild and unsuited to farming, these Potawatomi have adhered to their language and to many of their old customs and beliefs. Hunting, fishing, gathering wild rice and other native foods are still carried on. The medicine lodge is still in existence and many of the old ceremonies are flourishing.

HISTORY OF THE TRIBES

Such were the three tribes that we know once occupied the territory where the city of Chicago now stands, but in order to understand their coming and going, the history of this part of the Great Lakes region must be briefly considered.

When the accounts of the great French explorers and priests such as Champlain, La Salle, and Marquette first describe the state of the tribes, we find the Iroquois Confederacy, located in what is now the State of New York, to be the dominant military power. Archaeologists are inclined to believe that the Iroquois came to New York from the south, driving out the Algonkians, who once occupied the territory, and causing them to settle around the Great Lakes. The French found a branch of the Iroquois north of Lake Erie, whom they called the Neutrals. In 1606 Champlain found them allied with the Ottawa in fighting the Mascoutens to the west. In 1643 the Neutrals sent an expedition of some two thousand men against the "Nation du Feu," which attacked and destroyed a palisaded village and most of its inhabitants. The latter people may have been representatives of the Potawatomi, Mascoutens, Miami, or even some Illinois tribes. In 1648-49 the Huron tribes were destroyed by the Iroquois, and a few years later the Neutrals were likewise conquered by them, the remnant of the tribe being assimilated by the Seneca branch of the Iroquois. Thus as early as history records we find the Great Lakes region to be the scene of war and conquest. At that time the Chicago region was apparently occupied by tribes of the Illinois, and only the archaeological record can tell us who preceded them.

In 1634, Jean Nicollet met the Menominee, Winnebago, and probably the Potawatomi at Green Bay, Wisconsin. Another western war was then in progress between the

former people and their allies, the Sioux, against the Chippewa. The Lake tribes very early allied themselves with the French, who were the enemies of the Iroquois. In 1641, Verwyst states, the Potawatomi were living near the Winnebago. The Jesuit Relation of 1642 mentions them near Sault Ste. Marie, where they had fled to escape a hostile nation which was continually harassing them. There seems some reason to believe that the Potawatomi and the Sauk formerly lived in Michigan, and had been driven across the Straits of Mackinac by the Neutrals, who seem to be the nation referred to in the Relation. In 1667, Father Allouez met 300 warriors of the Potawatomi at Chaquamogon Bay. In 1670, a portion of them were living on the islands in the mouth of Green Bay. From the accounts of these early French missionaries, the Menominee, Sauk, Potawatomi, Miami, Winnebago, and Mascoutens seem to have taken refuge in various villages around Green Bay, having been driven there from the southeast. Tribal boundaries do not seem at all clearly defined, and earlier wars appear to have disrupted all the tribes of the region. Only the Winnebago are referred to by Father Dablon as original owners of the territory. The collective term "Nation du Feu," then, appears to refer not to one specific tribe, but to all those peoples that in the seventeenth century were congregated in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie and Green Bay.

During the years 1671 and 1672, the expatriated Hurons united many of the Ottawa, Sauk, Fox, and Potawatomi in a raid against the Sioux with whom they were then at peace, but the allies were severely defeated. At that time some of the Miami were living with the Mascoutens near Green Bay, but shortly afterward they moved south to where in all probability the remainder of the Miami were living around the southern end of Lake Michigan. There seem to be no records of the displacement of the Illinois proper by the Miami, but Charlevoix mentions a Miami village on the site of Chicago in about

1671. Harassed by their Iroquois neighbors, the Illinois tribes seem to have congregated on the Illinois River, near Fort St. Louis, where they are mentioned by La Salle in 1684. Meanwhile the Fox, as well as the Potawatomi, were moving south along the west shore of Lake Michigan. The former, allied with the Sauk, came into violent contact with the French, and were finally crushed by Sieur De Villiers at Little Butte des Morts in 1728.

The Potawatomi, however, continued their southward movement. By the close of the seventeenth century they had displaced the Miami, and held all the territory around the southern end of Lake Michigan, one band living on the present site of Chicago.

The exact origin of the name "Chicago" is not certain. In 1721, Father Charlevoix, as has been stated, derived the name from that of the river, and it is known that about 1725 there was an Illinois chief of this name—facts that seem to point to the Illinois as the name-givers. In the Sauk, Fox, and Kickapoo dialects, however, it is translated as "place of the skunk," and the Menominee and Ojibwa have legends referring to that animal in connection with the site. In 1923, a well-informed Potawatomi, "White Pigeon," seventy years of age, stated that the word "Chicago" was derived from a Potawatomi word which referred to the "place of the wild onion," which grew so plentifully in the swamps in and around Chicago. The name is mentioned in connection with a Miami village in the period of the earliest explorations, between 1670 and 1700, but one is tempted to attribute the name to the Illinois who seem to have been the first historic people to live near the site. At this late date the question is probably unanswerable.

Following this period of aboriginal warfare, of which we are only able to catch glimpses, came another long period of fighting in which the French, British, and Americans fought for a continent, and again the region here discussed was the scene of a large part of the struggle.



POTAWATOMI MEDICINE BAGS

The one on the left made of mink skin with bead decorations
The one on the right made of otter skin with porcupine quill decorations

Champlain's early battle against the Iroquois had given the latter to Great Britain as powerful allies. In turn, the majority of the Lake tribes, who feared the Iroquois, espoused the cause of France. As early as 1690 a British envoy came to Wisconsin to obtain aid from the Indians, but was unable to conclude alliances. During the French and Indian wars the Lake tribes united with the French, and under Sieur Charles de Langlade, in 1755, were responsible for the crushing defeat of the British forces under General Braddock. Toward the close of the war, as the power of France was waning, Pontiac, a great chief of the Ottawa, organized a conspiracy of all the tribes against the British. All the forts save Detroit and Fort Pitt were captured, and their garrisons massacred; but the French were already defeated, and the great scheme of Pontiac was doomed to failure. Failing to stir up the tribes along the Mississippi, he finally made peace at Detroit in 1765. Later, while attending a drinking carousal at Cahokia, Illinois, he was murdered by an Indian of the Kaskaskia branch of the Illinois tribe.

This murder greatly outraged the Lake tribes, and a war of extermination was waged against the Illinois, reducing them to a pitiful handful that took refuge with the French settlers at Kaskaskia. The murder of Pontiac occurred in 1769, and by 1800 there were only a hundred and fifty Illinois alive; thus as a distinct people they fade out of history. The lands of the Illinois were taken over by the Kickapoo and Potawatomi. On the opening of the Revolutionary War the Potawatomi sided with the British, and were active from time to time against the United States, until "Mad Anthony" Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers and the ensuing Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The British, however, by generous trading and bribery kept the allegiance of the Lake tribes for almost half a century after the Northwest Territory passed out of their hands. At the time of the Treaty of Greenville the Potawatomi ceded to the United States an area six miles

square, located at the southern end of Lake Michigan. There in 1804-1805, Fort Dearborn was erected. Immediately following this treaty the Potawatomi notified the Miami that they intended moving down upon the Wabash River, and shortly afterward did so, driving the Miami to the northwest of that river. Thus the Potawatomi, occupying about fifty villages, were dominant in a large territory that included northern Illinois, Indiana, and part of Michigan.

Just prior to the War of 1812, Tecumseh and his brother, the Shawnee Prophet, organized a great revolt among the Mississippi tribes, but, influenced by John Kinsey and the American officers at Fort Dearborn, the Lake tribes were, on the whole, inactive. General Harrison's victory over the Prophet at Tippecanoe ended the revolt, but it was closely followed by the second war between the British and Americans. Incited by the British agents at Malden and near-by posts, the Lake tribes created havoc along the American frontier. Threatened by superior forces, Captain Heald, commanding Fort Dearborn, on the site of Chicago, abandoned the fort against the advice of Winnimeg, a friendly Potawatomi chief. The ensuing massacre of a large part of the garrison followed. The Potawatomi were the tribe concerned in this well-known affair, certain of the Indians distinguishing themselves by their cruelty, and others, like Black Partridge and Waubensee, by their mercy and aid to the survivors. Captain Heald, John Kinsey, about twenty-five soldiers, and the majority of the women were protected by friendly Indians, and eventually reached safety.

The Potawatomi burned the fort, but at the termination of the war in 1816, it was rebuilt. A sketch of Chicago as it appeared in 1820, four years later, is reproduced in Plate II. A garrison was maintained here, off and on, until December 29, 1836, one year before the incorporation of the City of Chicago.

The close of the War of 1812 practically marked the end of the Indians' day in the Northwest Territory, for, with peace, the rich lands of the region began to draw settlers in ever-increasing numbers. With the settlers came the military forces of the United States, now free from the threat of European interference. The Lake tribes who had formerly roamed at will now began to be driven to the west. The Blackhawk War of 1832 was the last feeble flare of opposition to the American advance, but the recalcitrant Sauk and Fox were soon crushed by overwhelmingly superior forces. In the same year the Winnebago ceded to the United States all their territory southeast of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers. In 1833, a grand council of chiefs and headmen met at Chicago and ceded all their lands east of the Winnebago territory. The three tribes—Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa—who claimed to have once been a single people, were represented at this council, wherein they gave up all their best lands, and were assigned to various reservations. Two years later, the Potawatomi came to Chicago to receive their annuities before leaving for their western reservation. About 5,000 of the tribe were present, and farewell ceremonies were held on leaving this rich territory which they had previously conquered by force of arms. Most of the tribe were moved to a reservation at Council Bluffs, Iowa, where we have the description of them given by Father De Smet; others fled to Canada and to their old territory in northern Wisconsin, for they feared the Sioux, who were to the west of the new reservation.

The tide of settlers soon reached the five-million-acre reservation assigned to the Potawatomi in Iowa. In 1846, all those who had not fled to Canada or Wisconsin were moved to a new reservation in western Kansas. There they remained until 1868, when they were again moved into the "Indian Territory" of Oklahoma. As a result, the Potawatomi are scattered from Ontario and northern Wisconsin, through Iowa and Kansas, into Oklahoma.

In the former areas they maintained some of their old life, but in the other regions they have taken over the ways of their white conquerors, and many of them have become prosperous citizens.

It has been estimated that in 1918 there were 3,731 Potawatomi in the United States and 3,000 in Canada, making a total of 6,731 in all. The Department of Commerce report, in 1910, gives the total number of pure blood Potawatomi in the United States as 960, and both mixed and full bloods as 2,440. If the figures given for 1918 may be trusted, the tribe would seem to be increasing, although the 1910 report shows that a great deal of racial intermixture has taken place. In 1905, according to the Handbook of the American Indian, there were only 195 persons, mostly of mixed blood, representing the Illinois tribes. The report of 1910 does not mention the Illinois, and gives the total population of the Miami as only 226, with merely 59 persons of full blood. Clearly, of the tribes who once lived in this region, the Potawatomi alone have survived in anything like their old numbers, while the Illinois and Miami have come almost to the verge of extinction. Such were the peoples that within the brief space of written history fought and lived on the site where the City of Chicago now stands. Behind this realm of history there stretches a vast period of which we may only learn as the work of American archaeology proceeds.

WILLIAM DUNCAN STRONG

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CEREMONIAL OBJECTS OF THE POTAWATOMI

Above, drum of the Waubano Society, with design symbolizing the dawn

Below, two ceremonial pipes

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